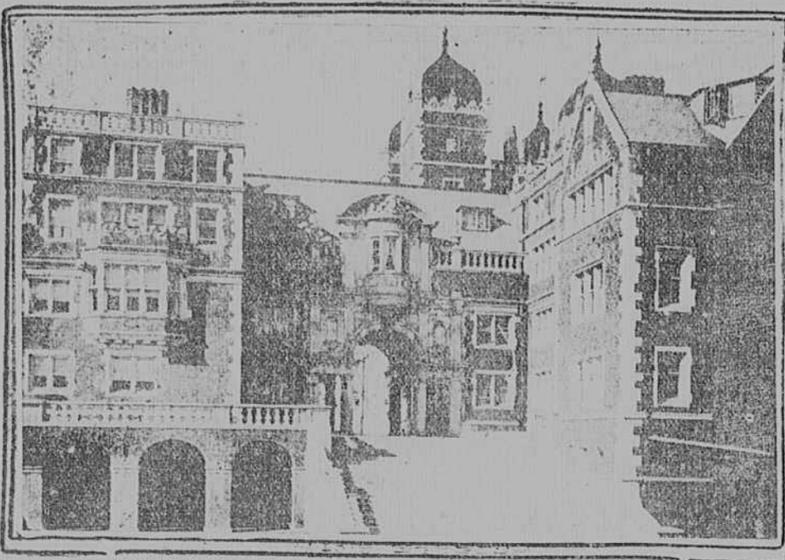


"Shall I Send My Child to College?" Question Now Uppermost in Parental Mind



BY JOHN ELFRETH WATKINS.

UPPERMOST in the minds of thousands of parents is the question: "Shall I send my young offspring to college?"

And inasmuch as advice on no other subject can just now be as welcome to fathers and mothers vexed by this vital problem, I have persuaded the national government's highest authority on education to discuss it with me, for their special benefit. I refer to the United States commissioner of education, Dr. Philander C. Klaxon, who, when elevated to this responsible office a year ago, was recommended to the President as one of the most progressive and successful educators of American youth to be found in the country. Dr. Klaxon is himself, very much of a college man. After having been graduated at the University of his native Vermont, he took a post-graduate course at Johns Hopkins, before being called to take the directorship of the national bureau of education, here in Washington, and he had been a schoolmaster for one year, a superintendent of public schools for eight years, the superintendent of a summer school for nine years, and a professor of education for eighteen years, one-half of which period was spent in a state normal college and the other half in the faculty of his alma mater.

During this time he has also edited two educational journals, has made two tours abroad to investigate the educational systems of foreign countries and has served as an officer in seven learned societies. Having commenced his own education in 1867, he has had in his life, in every stage of school, college and university life, from the bottom upward, and that he has striven for our youth's better opportunities for play, as well as for study, is revealed by the fact that he is both a director of the Playground Association of America and chairman of the National Storytellers' League. But for fear that after perusing such a lengthy record of his educational experiences you should picture Commissioner Klaxon as an old, wrinkled man, I should mention that he is a young man, and that he began his career as somewhat of a prodigy, having received his university degree while still a boy in his teens, and that he is as yet within his forties.

Useless Luxury to Whom?

"Is there any use of sending men or women who can afford it, for whom college training would be a useless luxury?" I asked Dr. Klaxon.

"The function of the college is not alone to educate, but to make a living, he replied. "A further and most important function is that of preparing one for life, of giving what we call culture."

"When the farmer, the blacksmith, the preacher, the merchant, the doctor, the schoolmaster, the lawyer, and the housekeeper have finished their day's work, they all remain men and women alike. If a college education can enrich their lives and add to the joy of living, then it should be the heritage of one as much as of another."

"In what special fields of endeavor is the demand for college graduates growing?"

"In all departments of life, a study of any list of men now enjoying prominence in creditable lines of activity shows very clearly the value of a college education to-day. For example, there has been issued this year a new edition of a standard biographical directory of notable living men and women of the United States. It furnishes educational data concerning 13,318 individuals who are in high official positions, who are connected with scientific learned societies and who have achieved special prominence in creditable lines of effort. Of these, considerably more than half (75 per cent) are college graduates and nearly three-fourths (74 per cent) have had college training. There are but 10 per cent who have had only common school education, while forty-three out of every thousand (less than a half of 1 per cent) have been self-taught. The lesson in these figures, therefore, is that the college educated American has more than 150 times as much chance of becoming notable as the citizen who has not been to college and more than 200 times as much chance as the citizen whose education has stopped at the common school. So much for the college's advantage in making one notable."

College and Earning Power.

"What about earning power? How does the college affect that?"

"It is as easy to give figures as to answer that also, showing that college training increases the earning power of a man or woman in all departments of economic and industrial life. This a recent study of one hundred of the wealthiest men in the United States, made for the American Educational Review, leads the investigator to the conclusion that a college education increases a man's chance of succeeding in business and becoming rich, 275 fold. One of our well-known technical colleges lately collected reliable statistics concerning the annual earnings of graduates who had been out in the world only ten years. It was discovered that the average member of the class was receiving \$4,100 a year; that 10 per cent of the members were earning from \$3,000 to \$10,000, and nearly 5 per cent from \$10,000 to \$20,000. Only two of these men were receiving less than \$1,000.

Effect on Farm Earnings.

"Take the farmer, for example. Figures gathered and tabulated some time ago show that of a large group of men engaged in practical farming, those who attended the district school receive an annual income of only \$315, those who stopped at the high school, or its equivalent, \$622; those who attended college or a university, \$847. These statistics further show that regardless of his capital, the educated farmer secures a larger income for his labor than the uneducated tiller of the soil. Of those investigated, the class with \$2,000 capital or under can get an average income of \$187, if they have had only district schooling, but



DR. P. P. KLAXON.

FRATERNITY HOUSE AT A BIG UNIVERSITY. COLLEGE CLASS IN "HOME MAKING."

A BIG UNIVERSITY. CLASS AT AN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE. SWIMMING POOL IN A GIRLS' COLLEGE.

intendencies of schools, and to become principals and instructors in high schools. In many States it is practically impossible for a man or woman without college training to secure a position as public school principal or as instructor in a public high school."

As Factor in Politics.

"Are college men as successful as politicians as those of less schooling?"

"Fetters of our congressional directorates during the past generation will reveal the growth in the proportion of college men who have controlled our government. The three candidates for the presidency this fall are university men, and one has been a college president, as has been the present Speaker of the House. After making a study of the more than 15,000 eminent men of the past and present listed in Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, President Taft, concludes that a college education increases a man's chance of reaching the lower house of Congress 352 fold, the Senate, \$30 fold, the presidency, 1,202 fold, and the Federal Supreme Court, 2,027 fold.

Effect Upon Society.

"But it must not be forgotten that the benefits of education are not primarily for the individual educated. Should we not be more interested in the results which come to society and the State as a whole? Dr. Goran does not receive in wages or salary the full value of his services in making possible the digging of the Panama Canal. Neither does General Goethals receive more than a small fractional part of what his scientific knowledge of engineering adds to the value of

the labors of all the men whom he directs.

"Professor P. G. Holden by his discoveries in the science of testing seed corn has added tens of millions of dollars to the value of the corn crop of the United States, but he does not receive even a small per cent of this for his discovery. Babcock has added millions of dollars to the dairy products of the country by his invention of the milk tester, for which he received no money. Alexander Graham Bell by the invention and improvement of the Bell telephone has added much more to the wealth of the country as a whole than he has ever received in royalties or dividends. Billions of dollars have been added to the wealth of both Europe and America by the discoveries of Pasteur, whose pay for his scientific achievements and their practical application was limited to a very few thousands. It would be hard to mention thousands of college men and women who have added to the wealth of the world many times more than they have ever received for their services. Indeed, men and women of this kind take special delight in rendering service rather than in receiving for it. In so far as society is built on intelligence and culture, in proportion that it is made better by sweetness and light, college education everywhere ministers to its progress.

"Probably since the days of the prophets and the beginning of Christianity no stronger force for moral and social betterment has come into the life of the world than the modern scientific spirit. Conduct based on the recognition of the eternal verities is of a much higher moral character than that based on prejudice, superstition and the ideas of chance and arbitrary will. College education fosters this spirit and gives to its possessor a large measure of scientific knowledge."

Working Way Through College.

"Are opportunities for poor youths to work their way through college increasing?"

"Yes. Everywhere they serve in dining rooms as waiters, they make money as stenographers and typewriters; they attend to electric lighting machinery, heating plants, etc., to earn their college expenses. During the summer they are to be found working in the hotels on the railroads and on the boats; at agricultural and mechanical colleges many of them work on the farms and in the experiment stations. At the University of Cincinnati there is an arrangement by which engineering students work half their time in the shops, on the railroads and elsewhere, for which service they receive pay sufficient to defray their expenses in the university.

"Poor boys and girls are finding that college education is being rapidly brought more and more within their reach by the rapid increase of private bequests and public appropriations made to our colleges. In many of the State universities and the State agricultural and mechanical colleges the tuition is entirely or approximately free, and education in other institutions costs much less than the same kind of education could possibly cost without these large endowments.

Cost of College Career.

"The cost of attendance at college now, including board, clothing, lodging and other living expenses, may be greater than it was twenty years ago, but in that time the cost of living has increased everywhere. The type of education, especially in technical subjects now given in most institutions, would be impossible without the large and costly equipments provided by bequests. About 12,500 American scholarships and fellowships offer young men and women free tuition, and in many cases their living expenses and something more. The great majority of these scholarships and fellowships have been made possible by private bequests, by which our institutions of higher learning are made very rich as compared with their condition several years ago, will pauperize the young men and women, however, groundless. Tuition fees paid by our college students now amount to approximately \$19,000,000, an average of \$100 for each student. In addition to this, the students pay living expenses and fees, which, it is true, still put the possibility of college education far beyond the reach of the great majority of bright boys and girls, and there is greater need now than ever before in the history of the country for larger appropriations of public funds and for larger endowments from private bequests. It is estimated that the average cost of teaching and caring for a boy or girl

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Persons Who Have Visited Richmond

(Continued From Fifth Page.)

There is a space of a little more than a century. The city that Thomas Moore visited at the beginning of the nineteenth century has undergone many vicissitudes of fortune since and degradation, and bitter years of poverty and struggle.

It has lost much, and it has gained much, in population, in business interests and in wealth. That it had individually in 1863, Moore's poem proves indisputably greater than that of Columbus, the capital of Ohio, and doubly as great as that of Trenton, the capital of New Jersey. The college boys alone could set up for themselves a record Omaha, the college girls another Norfolk. In proportion to population the share of our youths doing the real college work has increased about 140 per cent in the last twenty years. We now have upward of 600 real colleges, about 100 more than twenty years ago, and in the same length of time our army of college professors has increased from 10,000 to 23,000.

College Girl To-Day.

"Are our girls waiting on our boys in college ambition?"

"Decidedly. Within the last twenty years the proportional increase of our women in college has been more than 100 per cent, while that of our college men has been less than 75 per cent.

"This rapid increase of young women in our colleges has been one of the most remarkable features of modern education. Within twenty years these young college work above the preparatory grades, and increased percentage would better fit for economic life than other women. Everywhere they earn the better salaries and are able to conduct their own enterprises more profitably.

Effect on Her Marriage Chances.

"At the matrimonial opportunities of women influenced by college training?"

"I asked the commissioner in conclusion. "I believe against college women as having the advantage in this respect. It is probable that ten per cent of college women who marry is not quite so high as that of other women who become wives, but it is also probably true that of the same women a smaller percentage would marry. Even though they did not go to college, a large proportion of these women who first went to college in large numbers, especially in the educational colleges, would not have married at all or would have married late in life, even if they had not gone to college. These were the 'strong-minded' independent women who strongly felt their ability and had the desire to make their own way in the world.

"In the beginning, our college courses were adapted to women of this type, whereas they are now being more and more adapted to the 'strong-minded' independent women who strongly feel their ability and had the desire to make their own way in the world.

"European cities, London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Rome and hundreds of others have beauty of architecture—not skyscrapers—to enable material progress. These cities have, all of them, their art galleries, their music halls; centres that cultivate the love of beauty, that refine and educate taste. It is to be hoped again that Richmond will not build in such overwealth and greed of money as to forget and pass by influences, that above all else should be the leaven of prosperity and the rule and measure of true advancement.

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